

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 27, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
301 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Mayorkas and Secretary Blinken:

We write to urge you to extend and redesignate Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Somali nationals in the United States. Somalia remains unsafe for its nationals' return due to ongoing armed conflict and extraordinary temporary conditions, but current protections for Somali TPS holders expire on September 17, 2021.¹ The administration must both extend existing protections for current Somali TPS holders and redesignate TPS for Somalia so that those who arrived in the United States after the last designation in 2012 can obtain protection.²

By statute, the Secretary of Homeland Security must decide on TPS for Somalia by July 19, 2021.³ We call for a decision, publication of a Federal Register Notice, at least a 180-day registration period, and a public education campaign to inform the impacted community by that date.

Only last month, President Biden stated that “[t]he situation [in] Somalia continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States” and extended the national emergency with regard to Somalia.⁴ On April 1, 2021, the Biden administration continued Somalia’s national emergency declaration, citing conditions leading to the “deterioration of the security situation and the persistence of violence in Somalia.”⁵

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated the existing issues in Somalia: the World Health Organization has reported 14,486 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 753 COVID-19–related deaths in Somalia.⁶ Assuming that the cases and deaths have not been undercounted,

¹ 85 Fed. Reg. 14,229 (Mar. 11, 2020).

² *Id.* at 14,230.

³ Immigration & Nationality Act (INA) § 244(b)(3)(A), 8 U.S.C. § 1254a(b)(3)(A) (2021) (mandating that the administration review country conditions for an extension or redesignation of TPS at least 60 days before the designation period expires).

⁴ 86 Fed. Reg. 17,673 (Apr. 5, 2021).

⁵ 86 Fed. Reg. 17673 (Apr. 1, 2021), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/04/05/2021-07124/continuation-of-the-national-emergency-with-respect-to-somalia>.

⁶ *Somalia*, World Health Org., <https://covid19.who.int/region/emro/country/so> (last updated May 12, 2021).

the case-fatality rate in Somalia is an estimated 5.2%, nearly three times higher than the United States' 1.8%.⁷

Terminating TPS for Somalia would also have devastating consequences for U.S.-citizen children of Somali TPS holders, as parents would be faced with the impossible choice to either leave their children behind or take them back to dangerous conditions in Somalia.

We request that you extend for 18 months and redesignate TPS for Somalia, publish a timely Federal Register Notice, and to launch a culturally competent public information campaign to notify the impacted community of the decision and any actions that they must take by July 19, 2021. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, we call for at least a 180-day registration period for both current and potential TPS holders. We look forward to actions from your office prior to July 19, 2021.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

Adam Smith
Member of Congress

⁷ Mortality Analyses, Johns Hopkins Univ., <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/data/mortality> (last updated May 12, 2021).